2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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643 so briefly referred to was in the nature of a warning that the kingdom must be held together and certain Ngoni customs and institutions preserved. This general mandate to a new Paramount was in keeping with the Ngoni policy of maintaining order and justice within the kingdom, while showing all the aggressive qualities of warfare against external enemies.

173 643 In the story of their northward trek, the division of authority among the central Ngoni between the Maseko and the Phungwako clans was referred to as the Maseko taking the '*Bayete*' and the Phungwako taking the *tonga*.[1] In central Nguniland the *tonga* was a collective name given to royal medicines used at different times for different purposes and was not reserved for the medicine used in the army as in the northern kingdom. It was said to have been 'from the beginning in the south'; 'it is very old, ever since people were born'. The following description was given by a member of the Phungwako clan in the head village of Chief Kacere:

643 781 ¶ The Ngoni had protection for all their people of the most powerful kind. This was the *tonga*. This was specially to protect the Paramount at his accession. When the Ngoni were thus accustomed to being protected by the *tonga*, there was one thing which gave them protection above all others. If the Paramount died, in arranging matters, the *tonga* was essential in establishing the new Paramount. And if war had to be made, the *tonga* also gave protection so that they had strength to overcome their enemies.

Also when the Ngoni were travelling in wild places and did not find somewhere to stay, they began to listen to the *tonga*. The diviner, who went ahead with the *tonga*, looked to see if there were bad omens. When they found a place to stay and stayed there with their cattle, they were protected by the *tonga*, so that they were not afraid of anything. They just conquered the country and took the cattle and made the people surrender.

When getting ready the *tonga*, they could only do it with a sheep. They killed it, and took its blood and its fat and smeared the *tonga*. And the big people who were set aside for the work of the *tonga*, it was they who were doing these things. The meat of the sheep which was killed for the *tonga*, they did not eat it just anyhow, no. They were eating it in a special way, not in the house, no; nor with the women, no; but in a very different way from the meat of every day. They ate it without being greedy when it was divided, and they took care not to put some aside, for they feared lest someone should eat the *tonga*. They just ate to finish it quickly, and when they had finished they did not sleep in their houses with their wives, but they went apart and slept in the place where this was done for the *tonga*. Their sleeping was different from other days, for they did not sleep on good mats, no. When they had eaten meat for the *tonga* they changed their ways, to act differently from usual. Instead of

[1] The head of the Phungwako clan, Chief Kacere, ruled one of the Ngoni states in the Dedza district which, in the 1930's, was separate from the central Ngoni kingdom.

643 651 431 527 571 turn were invited to eat with the Paramount or summoned to special feasts. On the other hand there were people who seemed to have nothing, and who came in the hope of getting invited to eat food if they just sat in the kraal and looked hungry. Cibambo called them 'the notable people' and 'the poor people'. This contrast in behaviour ran right through Ngoni society and reflected the social standing of individuals who behaved in such different ways. There was a good deal of cadging for gifts and of gate-crashing at feasts on the part of people who had no intention, or no possibility, of making any adequate return. An Ngoni proverb illustrated the public attitude to reciprocal giving as distinct from begging: 'To say: Give, give, is to snatch. The child of a free man only gives.'

571 643 651 431 The bringing of tribute to the Paramount was only one aspect of the reciprocal relationships which ran right through Ngoni society, namely the bringing of gifts by a man in an inferior social position to his superior, with the expectation of receiving food or favour and of standing well with this superior. It was recognized that tribute was of two kinds, one of which was voluntary. If a *nduna*-*nkosi* or other notable wanted to please the Paramount he brought him presents—grain, flour, meat, beer. It was always emphasized that this was a free gift, with the added proviso that the giver wished to keep on good terms with the Paramount. Ngoni informants declared that the only compulsory form of tribute in pre-European days was that whenever a lion or a leopard was killed it had to be brought to the royal village through a succession of intermediaries, as described below.

These two principles of free giving and compulsory giving, and the attitudes engendered, are compared with the feeling about compulsory taxes under European rule in this text by Cibambo.

€ Although people hate giving taxes to strangers in this land, yet tribute (*imitulo*) was given to their *inkosi* and to other chiefs. Such tribute was given in an indirect way, that is the *izinduna* did not mark out those who gave and who did not give tribute. The Ngoni did not wish that every male should give tribute as is done by Europeans today. They were just pleased if the village headman or *nduna*-*nkosi* had given something even though other people in his village did not give anything. Even the *abanduna* themselves gave something at the time they thought it was convenient to themselves to give. There was no fixed time of the month or year. Much that was given as tribute was beer, meat, ivory, hoes and cloth, also cattle, sheep and goats after raids, and other loot from war.

[528] Power to 'eat' (*ukudla*) lion- and leopard-skins was given to certain people of the Swazi clans, but all the rest were obliged to bring them in. The lion- or leopard-skin had to be given first to the village headman. He went with it to the chief or *nduna*-*nkosi*. This one brought it to the *inkosi* along with his *amadoda* or *amajuba* of all his villages, the older men and younger men. This was like going as warriors and they went with dancing (*ligubo*). The one who first stabbed the animal was pointed out, and the [554]

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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exclusively related to the aristocratic tradition, and no account will be given or analysis made of ancestor cults practised by those groups in the two Ngoni kingdoms who were not of the leading clans. In the ancestor cult, as it will be described here, the emphasis was always on known and named spirits of the dead, associated with the village where the ritual was performed. In the approach to these known and named spirits—an approach which I have called a cult—there were three essential components: the diviner, the ritual address and the cattle. The diviner's role we shall discuss in Chapter III and the ritual forms of addressing the ancestors in Chapter IV. The Ngoni believed they could not approach their ancestral spirits except through their cattle, which had first to show that the spirits agreed to prayers being made, and the sign was that the beast urinated. The sacrifice of a beast was an integral part of the rite, which was concluded by the suppliants eating the meat together. At no point in their common life did the Ngoni more clearly demonstrate their dependence on their cattle than in the ritual of addressing their ancestral spirits. For this reason, in Chapter II we shall review the place of cattle in Ngoni life and relate it to their role in the ancestor cult.

Ancestral spirits of the Ngoni Paramounts.

The reigning Paramount and his predecessors in that office held an unchallenged supremacy in the hierarchy of the Ngoni kingdoms. The Ngoni believed that the line of dead Paramounts similarly led the hierarchy of the ancestral spirits, and that the dead Paramounts had power to help the Ngoni nation in time of need. It was taken for granted that when Paramounts died they would continue to be powerful and held in great respect, and that their position in the spirit world would enable them to influence UMkulumqango, the Great Spirit. This Great Spirit was believed to be the creator of all things and the ultimate source of power, particularly of sending rain, success in war, and deliverance from pestilence; and he was in general regarded as the giver of health and strength to mankind. The Ngoni held that those ancestors who were nearest to the living in time, whose names they knew, possessed less power than the remote ancestors whose names had been forgotten. On the same principle UMkulumqango, the Great Spirit, the originator of all creation, possessed more power than any other being, but, since he was so far removed in time from the living, no one could know his praise-names or his genealogy, and therefore he could not be addressed directly. In the same way the remotest ancestors of the Paramount could not be addressed directly because their praise-names were unknown to living men. Only those direct ancestors of the Paramount, whose names and genealogy and praise-names were known, could be addressed correctly and they could be counted on to use their influence with remoter and more powerful ancestral spirits and with the Great Spirit himself.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Cattle in the ancestor cult

The Ngoni, unlike the Swazi as described by Dr. Kuper,[1] had no clear ideas about the life after death as lived by their immediate ancestors with whom they had associated in their lifetime. They did not, as the Swazi did, picture them living somewhere surrounded with cattle and other familiar creatures and objects. The importance of bringing the spirit back (*ukubuyisa idlozi*) to the house where it would be cared for signified two main things for them. The first was the continuous association of the spirit of the dead with the living persons in the community to which he had belonged, through the individuals belonging to the house, the actual hut where the sacrificial vessels were kept, and the cattle which belonged to the house. The other significant point was that contact with the returned spirit, and through him with the spirits of more remote ancestors, could only be established in the village containing the cattle of the house to which the dead man had belonged.

We shall be examining some aspects of the ritual of addressing the ancestral spirits in a later chapter of this section. Here we shall establish three constituent parts of the ancestor cult in which cattle were essential links between those taking part in the cult and the spirits whom they addressed.

The first part was the group of ceremonies which took place at death, at the burial, at the first ritual shaving and at bringing back the spirit. A text by Lopati Nzunga (see Chapter IV, p. 200) illustrates how three parts of a beast—the skin, the kidney fat (*nseso*) and the gall bladder (*nyongo*)—were considered essential for Ngoni burial. It was interesting to find in Blantyre among educated Ngoni who were Christians and occupied clerical and commercial posts, that they had given up the cow-skin for wrapping the corpse and substituted a coffin. But they admitted confidentially that in most Ngoni funerals the use of the *nseso* and the *nyongo* was customary. After the burial the ritual shaving, shared in by all who attended the funeral, was accompanied by the killing of a beast and the consumption of its meat, though with no ritual significance beyond its association with the purification of the mourners and their integration as a group. From six to twelve months later the second shaving and the bringing back of the spirit was also accompanied by killing a beast and eating its meat. These ceremonies expressed the sense of loss felt for the human person who had died, the sorrow of the mourners, their successive acts of purification which served to bring them together, and the final bringing of the spirit to live among them again. As we have seen, each stage of the death and mourning rites was accompanied by the eating of a beast or the use of certain parts of a beast. The cattle of the house to which the dead person belonged were used to bury him or her, to strengthen the mourners, and to reintegrate the spirit with the living community.

[1] Kuper, H. *An African Aristocracy*, p. 180.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

769 In another part of the cult cattle played a still more direct part. When
● 835 a diviner advised that prayer should be made to the spirit of a leading
787 man on behalf of someone of his clan who was sick, the man who was in charge of the *gogo* section of the village informed the head of the clan or *banja* and they agreed to address the spirits, and to offer a sacrifice if the spirits were willing. The sign of willingness on the part of the spirits was for the selected beast, when it had been driven out of the kraal, to urinate or make dung. If either happened they said the spirit was willing, and arranged a time for the prayer and sacrifice. If neither happened, if the beast just stood still or lay down, the spirits had 'refused' and the sacrifice could not go forward. This sign or lack of sign by the beast could not be ignored, and was a further illustration that the Ngoni considered cattle to be essential as a medium of approach to the spirits of their ancestors.

When the beast 'refused', those responsible called the diviner again and asked for an explanation. He produced a reason and advised them to try again, and the process was repeated until the sign of agreement was given. There was always anxiety when the beast 'refused', partly because of the delay in sacrificing and partly owing to an uneasy feeling that they had left something undone and the ancestral spirit was not pleased with them.

The main part of the ritual of sacrifice to an ancestral spirit was killing the beast, offering the meat to the spirits and the eating of the meat by the principal persons concerned. This we shall examine more closely in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE DIVINER IN THE ANCESTOR CULT

791 It has been apparent in the chapters on the Paramount and on warfare
769 in Part II, and in the two previous chapters of Part IV, that divining by an accredited person was a necessary preliminary for sacrificing to and addressing the ancestors.[1] I never heard or received any account of the ancestor cult in which divining was not specifically mentioned as the first step in the performance of the ritual. Moreover, all the diviners of good standing were themselves operating because they had contact with and were possessed by the spirit of an ancestor. By virtue of this direct contact with the spirit world the diviners claimed their special powers.

[1] The one possible exception was the first-fruits ceremony, but this had been given up before the Ngoni settled in Nyasaland, and the old men had no clear memories of the ritual followed.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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in three age groups on the verandah also came forward and, led by NaNkoloma, a widow of Njolomole I, thanked in the women's language, *'Zimoto, zaithwa mntwana wenhoti.'*

I did not witness any ritual sacrifices in the northern kingdom but the accounts given me by informants corresponded closely with the ritual in Mcakhatha just described. When sacrificing for rain to the spirits of the Paramount, a black ox with no white spot was driven into the kraal in the late afternoon and the chosen spokesman addressed the ancestral spirits of the Jere clan telling them that this was their beast, they must eat the meat and tell UMkulumqango that the people needed rain. While this man prayed to the spirits he stood facing the beast, and everyone else sat looking in front of them and keeping very quiet. The women stayed at home in their huts and the Paramount stayed in his hut 'as if mourning'. When the beast urinated and showed that the spirits had heard, a messenger came and informed the Paramount. The beast was killed early the next morning in the kraal. While the flaying took place, all the huts of the chief wives were smeared with dried cow-dung on the floors and on the smooth place outside the doors. The meat, in two parts, was taken into the *indlunkulu* and left there all night at the back, so that the spirits might lick it. The next morning the meat was cooked in the kraal by the *madoda* and when it was ready they reported to the big *induna*. He called all the people into the kraal and divided them into companies according to their sections and head villages. The meat was given to the head of each head village who divided it among his group. When everyone had finished, one of the leading men stood up and began to praise the spirit using his titles and praise-names (*izitshwa*). The rest stood up and shouted *Bayete*. They then began to dance a war-dance but, the informants added, that was soon stopped by torrents of rain.

These chapters on the Ngoni ancestor cult bring to an end this study of the two Ngoni kingdoms in Nyasaland in the 1930's. We have seen how their distinctiveness as a people depended on the culture which they brought with them from the south and how this culture was found among the families of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In the topics included in the three sections of this book: the political system, the social organization, and the ancestor cult, the main features of Ngoni culture are most clearly seen. In much of their economic and agricultural life there was little to distinguish them from their neighbours among the other Nyasaland peoples. The changes brought about by the missions, the schools, new forms of local government, and new types of occupation, were all tending to make the Ngoni less distinctive as a people. The conversion of some leading Ngoni to Christianity, as suggested in Chapter V of Part II, and the spread of schools were together the most powerful influences in altering Ngoni traditional culture. The

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

CHILDREN OF THEIR FATHERS

8	*Ukhole emxinyane*	Hawks fly and hover
9	*Ukhole emkhulu*	Hawks catch chickens
10	*Iziganyane eziseziyane*	Trees begin to flower
11	*Iziganyane ezikhulu*	Trees fruiting
12	*Inhlachana*	Trees fruiting
13	*Umgwa*	Trees fruiting

The months were more generally grouped in two main seasons: the rains, whose name meant that the earth was 'clothed and decorated with new grass, leaves and flowers'; and the dry season, the time for moving village sites, felling trees and clearing bush for new gardens, castrating oxen. It was the true Ngoni families who knew the names for the months and the relation of months to the seasons. Among these families in every Ngoni village there were men who watched the sun's movements, and noted the hill or tall trees behind which the sun set when it reached its most southerly point. This was for them one of the signals that the rains were near. If the rains did not begin when the sun reached this point, they announced that this year the rains were delayed and the crops would probably suffer. When the *isikaka* bird began to sing, the first man who heard it went to tell his neighbours to repair their hoe handles and begin to clear the fields, for the rains and the planting season was at hand. When a large flat mushroom appeared in the woodland, it too was the herald of rain.

Not only were these months and the seasons they indicated the means of regulating work. They were also the way by which the Ngoni reckoned time. They had rods for each month and notches for the days. They took these with them on campaigns, and when returning they produced the rods, and pointing to the notches they said: 'On the sixth day of the seventh month we began fighting against X's village,' or 'We reached that river on the first day of the fifth month.' Ngoni elders were however quick to point out that they were all trained from childhood up to have excellent memories,

3: Read E-! (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

231 561 severed portions. On branches of fresh leaves, brought by the younger herd-boys, were piled the sections of the animal, down to the lat bit of intestine, for distribution according to a fixed Ngoni pattern.

231 835 [268] A senior man of the house owning the beast, when all was ready, 'counted' all the parts, that is he named each part, head, horns, tail, feet, joints and internal organs, and each was pointed out to him as being present. The herd-boys standing round learned the names of the organs and the sections of the animal, and heard the names and status of the men to whom the parts were assigned. The herd-boys of the family of the owner were given certain symbolic parts: an ear, an eye and the nose, for hearing, seeing and smelling; parts of an artery and of an intestine as controlling the blood flow and the waste matrial, and the rectum as ejecting waste; and the foot for waking steadily and fast.

252 [251] Some of the meat was roasted over a fire, parts like the stomach and intestines were cleaned and boiled, some was dried slowly on a rack over a fire of green wood, and put in fibre bags for keeping. The blood was taken to the head woman of the house owning the herd. She cooked it with the fat round the kidneys till it coagulated and formed a dish, salty and meaty, much liked by the Ngoni, and rather akin to black pudding. The women also took over any spare fat and rendered it down and clarified it to use as [278] unguents.

233 868 The young adult who had had six or seven years of herding cattle and had advanced to be a senior herd-boy, had acquired not only certain manual skills such as those just described, but also some knowledge of the anatomy of cattle, some idea of the social attitudes towards cattle and their ownership, and some idea of their economic value to the Ngoni. For certain restricted ritual purposes, a cow in calf had to be killed for sacrifice, and herd-boys saw the foetus removed when the cow was cut up. They were also often present at the birth of calves in the bush, and had to wait

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

round to protect the cow and calf, until they were strong enough to go back to the kraal.

The intricate system of ownership of cattle, including the relation between a house and a herd, and between certain herds and the spirits of former great people, was part of a herd-boy's background knowledge. He listened at the kraal gate to the men discussing questions of ownership. When a decision was taken to kill a beast, or sell one, or to transfer one or more at a marriage, or to hand over a beast in payment of a fine, the senior boys knew which group of beasts in the kraal must be driven out to be looked over in order that a selection could be made by the man concerned.

The Ngoni classified their cattle according to age, sex, colouring, size and shape of horns, whether castrated or not, whether in calf or not. Knowledge of the extensive series of names used for these 'classes' of cattle was part of a herd-boy's A.B.C. By the time he was old enough to be told to drive certain cattle out of the kraal, designated by their clan, he knew exactly which ones were meant. He could also use the cattle terminology to be precise in telling an owner about a beast which had strayed or one that had a sore hoof, or one that was giving an exceptionally good or poor flow of milk.

Herd-boys learned that cattle constituted a form of wealth, not only by the numbers a man possessed and could display, but also because they were easily realizable assets. Cattle could be sold to pay taxes, debts and court fines; and to pay men working for an Ngoni owner of cotton or tobacco gardens. They learned also that since cattle could be converted into money, the men of the house owning the cattle could use the money to buy cloth. This cloth, the property of the house, was kept and looked after by the senior women, who would lend it out temporarily to young men wishing to dress up smartly to go courting or go on a visit.

In the modern forms of Nyasaland economy it was a

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

generally assumed that everything was 'dirty' which was not hygienically clean. The Ngoni resented this, all the more because of their cultural insistence on decency and order, and on certain forms of external cleanliness.

Their huts, furniture and mats were often infested with ticks and bugs—neither of which the Ngoni liked, regarding them as rather disgusting. The old remedy was to leave the tick-infested site and burn the objects full of bugs. As villages became more stationary and property accumulated in the huts, and became more valuable and expensive, they built strangers' huts for visitors who might otherwise infect their own. Bugs were dealt with by bringing all bedding, mats and bedsteads out into the sun and pouring boiling water on them again and again.

Similarly it was an aesthetic disgust rather than hygiene which made them insist that there should be no spitting or nose-blowing on the floors of huts or verandas. Such actions had to take place outside, and vehement comments were made when a visitor forgot his manners in this way. An ingenious tiny iron spoon with a long handle was used by the older Ngoni for cleaning the ears and nose.

Perhaps nothing showed the Ngoni pleasure in and desire for cleanliness so clearly as the quick and apt excuses made when standards were obviously in temporary abeyance. There was no doubt that young men and girls liked looking clean and well-groomed. The daily wash in the river with soapy leaves, followed by rubbing on fat or oil made the skin glisten. We have talked already about the use of twigs as tooth-brushes, the rinsing of the mouth before and after meals, and the use of astringent fruit to make the mouth feel clean.

The same scrupulous attitude about cleanliness was seen in the washing of dishes, spoons and cooking-pots after each meal. It was almost as if the standard of housewifery was proclaimed by the sight of food baskets, gourds, spoons, etc., spread on the platform outside the hut to dry. Washing up

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

the pounder of the ordeal poison opens his monkey-skin wallet, pulls out the poison bark, and breaks it off into the mortar with a hippo's tooth. When he is chipping it off, he does not finish all the bark he has in his hand, he chips off a little and leaves the rest. When he is doing this the bark jumps, and falls on the left, and again on the right. They surely know that here to-day wonders will befall and that men will die and women. Then the medicine man says, "Give us men to go and draw water." Then the old man asks, "How many men shall we bring?" And perhaps he says, "Bring three, because the people are many," and the doctor tells them, "You must not glance behind, but just draw the water and return." (Lest they give warning to the flesh-eaters.) When he has finished cutting down the bark, he bids his attendant "begin to pound." They do not pound the poison bark as they would grain, they pound, thud! thud! and turn the pestle in the hands. While the attendant is pounding, the pounder of the bark keeps tapping, rat, tat, tat, on the mortar, with his monkey stick [which monkeys use for digging roots], and chants—

IV. "You have heard mother of children,
Mother of children of *Kundawa*.
Indiscriminate slaughter is the game war plays,
It slew the baboon at *Bongwe*,
When you slay let your victims fall backward and not forward.
Bag, make the poison hear my words.
You are come into the village, you are their advocate.
They say, that here so and so and so and so have died.

6:Ratray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

VIII. Then the witch finder says, "That beer I had great trouble in buying, you must not waste it, no, you there, we only told you to sip it, do not you see it is a small pot." Then he knocks down the mortar with his foot, and beats together two pieces of metal. When he sees that one human flesh-eater is dead, he says he has caused the mortar to fall. Some, when dying, cry out [like a hyæna], "Uwi, uwi"; and people know he used to transform himself into that animal; should he roar like a lion, they know he was at times that mighty beast. Others again, when dying, clench their hands. Should they clench one hand, it is known they have eaten five people; if they clench both, men know their victims have been ten. When all have vomited, he causes the survivors to jump over the path. When he sees a man has jumped, he knows that one is an ordinary person and not an eater of human flesh, and the reason the doctor knows this is because he has washed the poison with a medicine made from the "*sirwiri*" mouse [and it cannot cross a path and live]. Then the medicine man says, "Let them return to the village now, where a tree has fallen you cannot hide the fall thereof." Any one who has withstood all these tests, on seeing the grass tuft on his hut, dies. When the doctor hears a man has died, he goes to the place to strip him of his cloth and cut off the belt of beads from his waist. Of them who die at the drinking-place and who are free born, their friends make some payment to the doctor, saying, father has died from the poison. Anything the dead man be a slave they burn the body. They who remained behind at the village will drink on the morrow. The pounder of the poison, on returning to his home, is given a goat, perhaps a slave whose "Let me go and bury them." Should the dead

6:Ratuzy E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 PR5 Ngoni PR5

turns it out. They also trap them with a falling stone trap, and a spring trap, and others they dig for and smoke out. Mice dig out a hole, and a little farther on make a little chamber, where their nest is; farther on still is their escape exit, with just a thin layer of earth between them and the surface, so that when any one starts digging they can just burst out there. Other mice make a nest in the grass. The *Siswiri* mouse people do not eat; it cannot jump a path; if it tries to, it dies.

XII

THE WITCH-FINDER

I. When a person has died, the chief mourner goes off to seek the witch-finder. When he finds him he says, "At my home something awful has happened, and I am saying that perhaps you can follow up the thing that has killed the person." The witch-finder comes very late in the evening. When he comes, the chief mourner gives him children to lead him to the grave. When they come to the grave there, he asks them, saying, "Which way did they come with the body?" And they say they came there. And he puts medicine where they came, and asks again, saying, "Well, and his head, which direction did they lay it?" And they tell him, "His head was in this direction." He again with medicine guards the place. Then the witch-finder makes fire, and kindles it into flame, and pours medicine on it; and he does so lest people see the fire. And then they see the human flesh-eaters

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

their anger and propitiate them. Yet this recognition is not made in any degree of affection but in the times of dark necessity. When the rain has not fallen, when locusts swarm and eat up their crops, when sickness and death are abroad in the village, the spirits are working out their vengeance for being neglected. Then they are remembered and sacrifice is made. There are also certain ceremonial observances on important occasions. Before the gardens are hoed, and when the reaping time draws near; if an army is going out to battle, or when a coronation takes place, then prayer is made. The confusion of the old and new ideas was amusingly illustrated at the last coronation ceremony, when Mpezembe, the eldest sub-chief, sacrificed a bull, and offering it to the spirit of the dead chief prayed him to bless the new chief, then added, "and, O Mombera, bless the teachers when they go about teaching the people the words of God." There was something very beautiful in this recognition of Christianity as but a fuller shining of the dim light they had.

Their old men are full of stories and traditions, some of them are uncommonly like the stories of Uncle Remus, and others with a curious echo of Old Testament story. There is a hill near Ekwendeni, where tradition says a great tower was built by the Tumbuka to reach into the moon. But the white ants ate away the foundation and the tower fell and the people were killed. I passed below this hill when I was on my way home, and chaffed my carriers on trying to build so great a tower with wood. They laughed, and said, "But do you know the story of the hill over there?" pointing to the north. No, I said, what is it? And they told me how that long ago the Tumbuka found the country too narrow, so they decided to climb into heaven and cultivate new gardens there. So they gathered the nation together and cut down all the trees, and began to build a huge tower on this hill. When they had got a great way up, some cried "Stop, we need build no more. Here is a ladder coming down out of heaven." And they looked up and saw great roots hanging down. So the people caught hold of these roots and began climbing hand over hand up to heaven. But suddenly while they were all climbing, the roots broke, and the nation fell to the earth and was snuffed out.

Like other children of nature there are men and women in the tribe who seem to have a wonderful gift of second sight. Forty years ago a regiment went out on a great raid. The witch doctor on blessing them told them that they would meet a white man